

WHAT MAKES THE COURT DIFFERENT

Offenders who commit quality-of-life crimes often have a multitude of problems that are related to their criminal activity such as, mental illness, substance abuse, homelessness, unemployment, illiteracy or learning disability, and the lack of social or family support. Community Courts address these needs through a non-traditional court process intended to reduce the likelihood that these offenders will commit new offenses after the court's intervention. In SCC offenders can have their cases dismissed or closed if they meet all court obligations. If they fail to comply, justice is swift and certain.

INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY

SEATTLE COMMUNITY COURT

Welcome:

We're on the Web!

www.seattle.gov/communitycourt/

For More Information Contact

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ELIGIBILITY FRAMEWORK

Offenders are identified early in the case process and given the option to participate in Community Court. Eligibility is determined by the following criteria and considerations:

- ◆ Case involves a quality-of-life crime.
- ◆ Defendant is not a public safety risk.
- ◆ Defendant has had fewer than three previous SCC dispositions.
- ◆ Defendant agrees to undergo an assessment of social service needs and to make contact with appropriate agencies.
- ◆ Defendant agrees to "pay back the community" by performing community service.



On March 19, 2010, Seattle Community Court (SCC) celebrated its fifth anniversary. In five short years SCC has supported the completion of well over 50,000 hours of community service (the equivalent of approximately \$500,000 worth of labor), saved the city nearly 1.5 million in jail costs and gained national recognition as a peer resource for other jurisdictions looking to improve their criminal justice system.

This innovative and proactive program enables people charged with non-violent quality-of-life crimes to access social services while paying back the community. Statistics show this approach is powerful and is working in Seattle.

Sincerely,

Honorable Fred Bonner

Seattle Community Court Judge

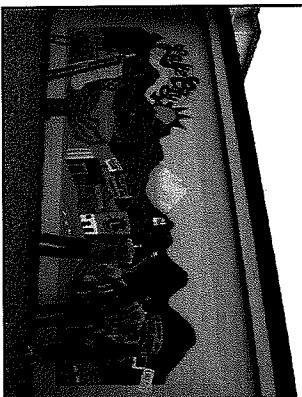
If your community needs support with neighborhood projects and you are interested in collaborating with us, we invite you to contact us. We are investing in communities all over Seattle. We would like to invest in your community as well.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY COURT

Community courts emerged to help alleviate the crush of minor offenses and quality-of-life crimes plaguing communities across the county. The theory behind Community Court is that offenders charged with relatively minor offenses often have complex circumstances that may be contributing to their criminal behavior. These challenges may include homelessness, drug or alcohol addiction, mental health issues, or lack of education or employment. These defendants, referred to by some as "chronic public system users," have lengthy criminal histories, often fail to appear in court as scheduled, and drain not only criminal justice system resources, but also those of emergency rooms and other social programs. Traditional responses to these offenders— jail, conventional probation and fines— seem to have had no deterrent effect. Community Courts uses non-traditional approaches to solve traditional problems.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

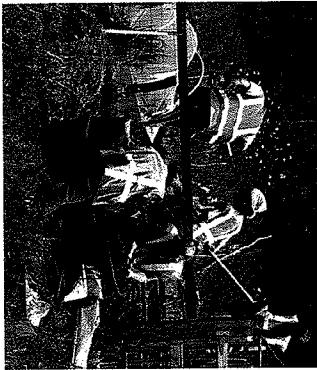
The Lake City Mural



SCC participants created a mural as a community service project. With a theme that reflects the community's history, the mural serves as a source of civic pride for the Lake City Community as well as our participants.

P-Patch Program

SCC participants have restored planting beds and pathways in several City of Seattle P-Patches. Crews removed weeds, spread mulch, and helped rebuild the raised beds so neighbors can plant flowers and vegetables.



SCC participants help improve our communities

A COMMUNITY-INVOLVED JUSTICE INITIATIVE

SCC has generated national recognition as one of a growing number of domestic and international Community Courts. In 2009, SCC was one of three sites chosen as a "mentor site" by the Bureau of Judicial Administration, serving as a peer resource for other jurisdictions looking to improve their criminal justice system.

SCC is a collaborative program involving Seattle Municipal Court, Seattle City Attorney's Office and Associated Counsel for the Accused, a public defense agency. Eligible defendants are not required to participate in Community Court. They must choose to enter the program and have their pending criminal case adjudicated through this innovative and non-traditional approach. The Court Resource Center, a Seattle Municipal Court Program, enables social service providers and public agencies to meet with SCC participants directly at the court, and thereby increasing the likelihood that services will be accessed.

SCC is supported by the community through the Community Advisory Board, Precinct Advisory Councils, and Neighborhood Task Forces. Many neighborhood groups partner directly with SCC for clean-up and other community support.

- ◆ graffiti and litter removal
- ◆ urban green space restoration
- ◆ assembly and distribution of hygiene kits to the homeless
- ◆ assistance at food banks and meal programs